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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 000360

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SUBJECT: CODEL TAUSCHER MEETS WITH JAPAN'S DEPUTY FOREIGN
MINISTER

Classified By: CDA Joseph R. Donovan; Reasons: 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: United States-Japan relations remain the "cornerstone" of Tokyo's foreign policy, not just for Japan's security, but for East Asia and the broader region as a whole, Japan DFM Yabunaka told visiting CODEL Tauscher on January 10. The DFM described Japan-PRC ties as improved from prior years, adding that the Tokyo-Beijing relationship is important for the region and globally. On regional architecture, Yabunaka noted that an EU-type arrangement would not be appropriate for the East Asian region, but predicted that economic trade would broaden. Tokyo welcomed inclusion of India, Australia, and New Zealand into the regional framework because inclusion of like-minded countries makes it easier to promote democracy. Japanese authorities have refused to assist Iran with civil nuclear development, despite warnings from Tehran that Tokyo would lose its development rights in Iranian oil fields, Yabunaka observed. End summary.

U.S.-Japan

¶2. (C) A Congressional delegation headed by Representative Ellen Tauscher, Chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee in the House Armed Services Committee, met with Deputy Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka January 10 to review United States-Japan relations, recent developments with the PRC, regional architectures, and Iranian nuclear cooperation. DFM Yabunaka described United States-Japan relations as the "cornerstone" of Tokyo's foreign policy, not just for Japan's security, but for East Asia and the broader region as a whole. Japan welcomes changes underway in the PRC, which has shown remarkable economic progress. Japanese officials still have serious concerns about Beijing, including the issue of transparency in the build-up of Chinese military forces. Looking at East Asia and the Korean Peninsula, Yabunaka continued, Tokyo is concerned about the difficult challenges that exist. Japan will need to remain engaged with the United States and others. He noted that the Six-Party Talks

would continue to address the challenge posed by the DPRK, which conducted a nuclear test in October 2006. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) also plays an important role in regional stability.

13. (C) The United States-Japan security treaty plays a constructive role in the region, according to Yabunaka. Previous concepts regarding regional security are no longer valid in the post-Cold War era. Current regional challenges are more complex, and present new questions, including technological advances and terrorism. The United States-Japan alliance will continue to operate as a framework for the region, he concluded.

4 (C) Rep. Tauscher congratulated DFM Yabunaka on reports noting his expected promotion to Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, the number two position in the foreign ministry. (Note: Yabunaka's appointment took effect on January 17.) The Congressional delegation's main task is to look at missile defense issues, Rep. Tauscher explained. No relationship, she continued, is more fundamental to United States security than the United States-Japan alliance. Congress understands the limitations imposed by Japanese law, particularly the Constitution's Article 9, but nonetheless seeks to deepen United States-Japan engagement efforts. The Congresswoman closed by congratulating Japan on the recent successful missile test conducted by the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) Aegis destroyer, Kongo.

Japan-China

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15. (C) In response to a question regarding views of the United States held by East Asian countries, DFM Yabunaka said that regional leaders and analysts look at the situation from two perspectives: 1) Japan-PRC relations, and 2) regional architecture. Noting that he had accompanied Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda to China in December, Yabunaka said that the Tokyo-Beijing relationship is important for the region and globally, e.g. with regard to addressing the issue of climate change. Japan and China are "two big powers that can make a difference in the world," he observed. The two countries have also taken steps to improve their military-to-military relations. A PRC navy vessel visited Japan in December, and a Japan MSDF ship will call on China in 2008, Yabunaka said.

16. (C) The two countries must be frank with one another, the DFM continued. Japan needs more transparency from the PRC, and the East China Sea joint resource development issue remains unresolved. Tokyo officials believe it would be premature for the EU to lift its arms embargo against Beijing. He reiterated, nevertheless, that there appears to be a real change in the atmosphere of Tokyo-Beijing relations, and that China needs Japan's assistance - particularly investment and technology.

Regional Issues

17. (C) Turning to regional architecture, Yabunaka noted that an EU-type arrangement would not be appropriate for the East Asian region. Economic trade - which he said is greater than among NAFTA members - continues to broaden. Tokyo would welcome the inclusion of India, Australia, and New Zealand into the regional framework because inclusion of like-minded countries makes it easier to promote democracy. A new ROK administration bodes well for the region, and the East Asian Summit will help to promote economic development and fight terrorism.

18. (C) Yabunaka cited two additional factors having important affects on regional structures: U.S. participation in APEC

and the ARF, and Washington's engagement via the Six-Party Talks (6PT). The 6PT is currently focused on DPRK denuclearization, but in the long-term could address regional security concerns.

Iran Nuclear Cooperation

¶9. (C) Japanese authorities have refused to assist Iran with civil nuclear development, despite warnings from Tehran that Tokyo would lose its development rights in Iranian oil fields, Yabunaka observed. When an Iranian delegation visits Japan, the Iranian side asks about Japan's program and the two sides "always argue" about the subject. More broadly, Yabunaka said there is a need for government-to-government agreements on civil nuclear safety. The potential for problems will increase as many countries demand nuclear energy. Japanese companies would be prepared to help, Yabunaka noted.

¶10. (U) CODEL Tauscher cleared this message.
DONOVAN